

RECOGNIZING PATRICIA VAIL FOR RECEIVING THE FLORIDA BAR PRESIDENT'S PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD FOR THE 4TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Patricia Vail for receiving The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award for the 4th Judicial Circuit.

In her legal career, she has served in several capacities, from statewide coordinator for Florida Legal Services to corporate counsel for CSX Transportation. In addition, Patricia has also served on the board of Jacksonville Area Legal Aid. Upon retirement from CSX Transportation, Patricia served in The American Bar Association's Collaborative Europe and Eurasia Law Initiative program as a volunteer lawyer in Kazakhstan. Patricia's commitment to pro bono work for low-income people and her positive impact have been quite remarkable.

Since 2008, Patricia has been a regular presence in Northeast Florida senior citizen centers and HUD residential facilities, where she has become a trusted pro bono legal resource. Patricia meets with individuals and groups as legal questions arise, and she helps prepare simple wills, durable powers of attorney, designation of health care surrogate, and designation of pre-need guardian. For nearly three years, Patricia provided these services single-handedly. When it became clear that the need far exceeded one attorney's ability in 2011, Patricia initiated a program to serve more area seniors with comprehensive and scheduled legal services called Advance Directives for Seniors Project. The Project provides 60–80 seniors annually with complete advance directive packets and has expanded to include senior patients at medical clinics and seniors at the Councils on Aging in Clay and Nassau counties.

In recognition of all her countless hours spent helping needy Jacksonville area residents through pro bono legal work, Patricia Vail was selected to receive The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award for the 4th Judicial Circuit.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and Members of Congress to join me in congratulating Patricia Vail on winning the Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,996,371,521,571.14. We've added \$8,369,494,472,658.06 to our debt in 7 years. This is over \$8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

COMMEMORATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREATER PEORIA CHILDREN'S HOME FOUNDATION

HON. DARIN LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honor a remarkable organization in the Peoria area. The Children's Home of Greater Peoria is celebrating 150 years of improving the lives of children and families.

Children's Home (previously Christian Home Mission, Women's Christian Association, and Home for the Friendless) opened in 1866 and is divulged in the principles of lending a helping hand to those in need, specifically women and children. Christian Home Mission was founded by women looking to alleviate suffering among the poor and provide shelter for homeless women and children. The foundation quickly expanded and became too small for the services they wanted to provide.

Children's Home continued to grow and began focusing on children with behavioral and emotional disorders who were abused. By 2009, the foundation furthered their mission in helping children by offering programs focused in special education, community-based opportunities, and live-in care and treatment.

Currently, Children's Home houses six locations and are staffing over 400 professionals to provide services for over 1,700 children and families each month. With each resource, Children's Home tirelessly dedicates itself to achieve its mission: Giving children a childhood and future by protecting them, teaching them and healing them, and by building strong communities and loving families. Because of their efforts, many disadvantaged children have brighter futures.

As a proud husband and loving father of three, I applaud the continual efforts of the Children's Home. Their success equates to our future's success. Congratulations, Children's Home, for its sesquicentennial and I wish the organization many more years of great service to our children.

HONORING PETER TER FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES IN THE PEACE CORPS AFTER COMING TO THE U.S. AS A REFUGEE

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Peter Ter for his outstanding service to his country through his volunteer work with the Peace Corps.

Peter Ter was born in southern Sudan, although his exact birth date is not known because his family, like many others, did not keep these records. His father and mother, a cattle keeper and farmer respectively, were both illiterate. He lived with his family, including five sisters and three brothers, in a small hut built with wood and mud and thatched with grass.

However, Peter's childhood was cut short due to the breakout of the Second Sudanese

Civil War that began in 1983 and lasted for twenty-one years. Like thousands of other children in Sudan, Peter became a "Lost Boy," losing his family in conflict between the warring Sudanese government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. After fleeing the violence and enduring a grueling journey, Peter ended up in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, living what he described as a hopeless life.

While living in the Kakuma camp, Peter completed an application for refugee status in America. In the application, he had to write one page on why he wanted to go to America. He wrote of living a hopeless life in the refugee camp and of how he yearned to go to a place where he could restore his dignity and educate himself—the United States of America.

After two years, Peter's application was approved, and he was resettled in my congressional district in Jacksonville, Florida. Peter went on to graduate from the University of Florida and attended graduate school at Brandeis University in Boston.

After graduation, Peter knew he wanted to give back to the country that had saved him, so he volunteered for the Peace Corps. Since 2009, Peter has served as a cultural ambassador and an international development practitioner in Azerbaijan, China, and the Republic of Georgia, promoting the values of the United States along the way. In his work abroad, Peter has faced many challenges, including blatant racism. However, having faced greater challenges before, he doubled down on his commitment to service and eventually earned respect in the villages and cities where he served.

As the co-chair of the House Peace Corps Caucus, I have the privilege of interacting with and supporting the work of outstanding individuals, such as Peter Ter. America is the world's most generous country, made up of people from around the world, and Peter is proof that this generosity touches those who need it most. I am proud that Peter calls Jacksonville, FL home. Peter has fully utilized the great opportunities presented to him by the United States of America and has dedicated his life to helping others around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and Members of Congress to join me in congratulating Peter Ter on overcoming great obstacles in his life and on his continued success abroad on behalf of our great nation.

HONORING DIANNE EDMONDSON'S LIFETIME OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dianne Edmondson for her distinguished service to the Denton County Republican Party.

Dianne Edmondson is a native Texan born in San Antonio. She attended Oklahoma State University where she was a member of the Gamma Phi Beta sorority. In 1983, she founded a successful executive search firm which she later sold in 2006. Dianne and her husband Bob live in Denton, Texas and are